 contact being capable of being releasably connected to said at least one ground terminal connection of the mounting strap.

5 49. (Amended) A modular electrical component, comprising
a removable electrical device having a plurality of power contacts extending from
a rear cover of said removable electrical device;
connecting means configured to fit within a junction box of an electrical wiring
system for connecting said plurality of power contacts to at least one conductor in the electrical
wiring system;
10 mounting means having a ground terminal connection secured to a rear cover of
said connecting means for mounting said connecting means to the junction box in the electrical
wiring system; and
a circuit interrupting portion for breaking a conductive path to a first power
contact of the plurality of power contacts.

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REMARKS

Claims 36-55 remain in the application. Independent claims 36, 43, and 49 and
dependent claims 37 and 44 are amended to more clearly define out invention and to avoid the
20 references cited by the Examiner.

The present invention is a modular electrical component assemblage that allows for the
easy replacement of electrical devices in electrical wiring systems by simply unplugging a
defective electrical device and replacing it with a new electrical device.

Amended claim 36 now recites the structure of a modular electrical component including
25 a base unit having first terminal members, a mounting strap having a ground terminal connection
for receiving a ground wire wherein the mounting strap extends longitudinally along the external
surface of a rear cover of the base unit and along end surfaces of the base unit, in combination
with a removable electrical device having a plurality of power contacts which extend from a rear
cover and capable of being releasably connected to the plurality of first terminal members of the

base unit wherein the removable electrical device can include a circuit interrupting portion for breaking a conductive path to at least one of the power contacts.

The rejection of independent claim 36 and dependent claims 38-39, and 41; of independent claim 43 and dependent claims 45, 46 and 48; and of independent claim 49 and dependent claims 51, 52 and 55 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Castellano (US 3,609,647) (hereinafter '647) is traversed.

In our invention, see Fig. 4, the mounting member 16 is a mounting strap secured to the external surface of the rear cover of the base unit and extends longitudinally along the external surface of the rear cover of the base unit and along the end surfaces of the base unit for mounting the base unit to a junction box and the mounting strip supports a ground terminal connection for receiving a ground wire.

Patent '647 neither discloses nor even suggests the structure of a mounting strap having a ground terminal. In '647, the receptacle 30 is secured to outlet box 10 by two separate brackets 32 which do not extend longitudinally along the external surface of the rear cover of the base unit, nor do the brackets support a ground terminal connection for receiving a ground wire. Referring to Figs. 1 and 4 of '647, the brackets extend only along the top and bottom end surfaces of the base unit and neither bracket can receive a ground wire. To attach the ground wire of '647 to the bracket would result in an inoperative device because the plug in unit would not be connected to a ground wire.

The Examiners assertion that Castellano discloses a modular electrical component comprising:..."a mounting strap [33] secured to a rear cover of the base to a junction box" is not accurate as noted above. Castellano discloses two brackets, he does not disclose a mounting strap.

Claim 36 is amended to more clearly distinguish our invention over Castellano by reciting the structure of "a mounting strap having a ground terminal connection for receiving a ground wire and secured to the external surface of a rear cover of said base unit and capable of connecting said base to a junction box ". It is to be noted by the Examiner that in Casellano the ground wire is not connected to either the junction box or the mounting brackets and, therefore, the ground wire cannot be connected to a mounting strap as we disclose and claim.

The rejection of claim 37 which depends from independent claim 36; of claim 44 which depends from independent claim 43; and of claim 50 which depends from independent claim 49, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Castellano and Osterbrock et al. (US 5,637,000) is traversed. As noted above, these claims depend from independent claims which

5 clearly avoid the '647 reference. The Examiners assertion that Castellano discloses what we disclose and claim except that the mounting strap has at least one ground terminal connection which extends into the base unit for connection with the ground contact of the switch is not accurate. As noted above, Castellano discloses two brackets, neither of which is connected to a ground terminal. If, a ground terminal is added to one of the brackets of Castellano as suggested

10 by the Examiner, and the ground wire 22 is then connected to that ground terminal, an inoperative device will result because the ground wire will not be connected to the wiring device. In addition, the substitution of the mounting strap of Osterbrock for the two brackets of Castellano would also result in an unsafe and inoperative device because the ground wire will be connected only to the mounting strap, not to the electrical device. It is only after the Examiner

15 has read and understood our invention that he has attempted to modify Castellano to create a structure that anticipates doing what we have disclosed and now claim as our invention. But, in doing so, the Examiner has created a device that has no ground wire connection for a connecting electrical device.

The Rejection of claim 40, which depends from independent claim 36; of claim 47 which depends from independent claim 43; and of claims 53 and 54 which depend from independent claim 49 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Castellano and Marcou et al. (US 5,594,398) is traversed for the reasons noted above.

Applicant respectfully submits that the application is in condition for allowance and respectfully requests early and favorable action be the Examiner. If the Examiner believes that

25 additional issues may be resolved by a telephone interview, the Examiner is respectfully urged to telephone the undersigned attorney


-----No fee is believed to be due with this Amendment. However, the Commissioner is-----
hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for the amendment, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 12-1185 to Leviton Manufacturing Co., Inc.

In the event that an extension of time is required to make this Amendment timely filed, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely and is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to Deposit Account No. 12-1185 of

5 Leviton Manufacturing Co., Inc.

Respectfully submitted,

10



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Date: January 22, 2003

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Version with Markings to Show Changes Made

In The Claims:

36. (Amended) A modular electrical component, comprising:

a base unit having:

a plurality of first terminal members; and

a plurality of second terminal members connectable to conductors

in an electrical wiring system;

a mounting strap having a ground terminal connection for receiving a ground wire and secured to the external surface of a rear cover of said base unit and capable of connecting said base to a junction box in the electrical wiring system;

a removable electrical device having a plurality of power contacts extending from a rear cover and capable of releasably connecting to said plurality of first terminal members, such that one of the said plurality of contacts releasably connects to one of said plurality of said first terminal members; and

a circuit interrupting portion located within the removable electrical device for breaking a conductive path to at least one (a first power contact) of the plurality of power contacts.

37. (Amended) The modular electrical component according to claim 36, wherein said mounting strap has at least one ground terminal connection that extends into said base unit; and

wherein said removable electrical device has at least one ground contact extending from said rear cover of the removable electrical device, said at least one ground contact (is) being capable of being releasably connected to said at least one ground terminal connection of the mounting strap.

43. (Amended) A modular electrical component, comprising:

a removable electrical device having a plurality of power contacts extending from a rear cover of said removable electrical device;

a base unit configured to fit within a junction box of an electrical wiring system, said base unit having a plurality of terminal connections, wherein each terminal connection is

connectable to at least one conductor in the electrical wiring system and to at least one of said power contacts;

a mounting strap having a ground terminal connection secured to the external surface of a rear cover of said base unit and capable of connecting said base unit to the junction box in the electrical wiring system; and

a circuit interrupting portion located within the removable electrical device for breaking a conductive path to at least one (a first power contact) of the plurality of power contacts.

- 10 44. (Amended) The modular electrical component according to claim 43, wherein said mounting strap has at least one ground terminal connection that extends into said base unit; and wherein said removable electrical device has at least one ground contact extending from said rear cover of the removable electrical device, said at least one ground contact (is) being capable of being releasably connected to said at least one ground terminal
- 15 connection of the mounting strap.

49. (Amended) A modular electrical component, comprising
- a removable electrical device having a plurality of power contacts extending from a rear cover of said removable electrical device;
- 20 connecting means configured to fit within a junction box of an electrical wiring system for connecting said plurality of power contacts to at least one conductor in the electrical wiring system;
- mounting means having a ground terminal connection secured to a rear cover of (associated with) said connecting means for mounting said connecting means to the junction box
- 25 in the electrical wiring system; and
- a circuit interrupting portion for breaking a conductive path to a first power contact of the plurality of power contacts.